



STATE OMSBUD
KAREN W. SCHAEFER

Karen W. Schaefer is a Colorado native who was born and grew up in north Denver. She graduated from North High School and completed her B.A. degree in Psychology at the University of Chicago in Chicago, IL. After college, she moved to California and began a career in the human resources profession under the Civil Service Commission at the County of San Diego, working as a generalist doing recruitment, selection, classification, compensation, grievance resolution, and presenting cases to the Commission. She continued her education at San Diego State College and UCLA Institute of Industrial Relations. Subsequently, she moved into the field of labor relations at the County when legislation was passed to permit a modified form of collective bargaining. Karen continued her education and experience in this area of human resources when she moved to the bay area to work as a consultant and labor negotiator through the Industrial Employers and Distributors Association, an employer's organization for public sector entities and private sector firms (both union and non-union) throughout the bay area and beyond. Six years later she moved to southern California as a manager of labor relations with a regional airline, leaving there to start an electronics distribution company with her husband.

Karen returned to Colorado in 1988 with her twin sons, buying a home in Boulder. She began working with state government as an HR specialist at CU Boulder in 1994. She accepted a position with the Division of Human Resources in 2001 and performed HR office audits at many state agencies, administered the statewide performance management program, and subsequently moved into the state personnel rules interpreter position, which included official rules interpretation on behalf of the State Personnel Director, coordinating rule making, and presenting training on rules. She also obtained her national certification as a Senior Professional in Human Resources (SPHR) thru SHRM, a national professional HR managers association.

In May 2007, Karen established the State of Colorado Organizational Ombuds office at the initiation and under the direction of the Executive Director of DPA. This program is the first Ombuds program for employees at the state level within the United States. The Ombuds program is an additional resource for state personnel system employees to surface and resolve workplace concerns safely and without fear of retaliation. The office has a charter and adheres to the code of ethics and standards of practice of the International Ombudsman Association: Confidential, Informal, Neutrality and Impartiality, and Independence.